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**THE HISTORY OF ASIATIC DEPARTMENT
BOSTON MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS**

- focused on the Far Eastern Arts-

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master's Degree in Museum Professions
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I. Introduction

The Museum of Fine Arts was founded on February 4, 1870 and has built its renowned Asian collection since its foundation. As a private institution, the Museum originated from the Boston Athenaeum, a combined library and art gallery, which was the principal repository of fine art collections in Boston. The Asian collection of the Museum comprises a wide range of objects from various Asian countries. Many portions of the collection were donated in the late 19th century when Asian countries were hungry for Westernization.

It is often, mistakenly, assumed that "Boston's great collections of Asian¹⁾ art are a heritage of the China Trade."²⁾ In fact, the Asian collection of the Museum began with the collection of Edward E. Morse, who went to Japan to study marine shells; and was enlarged by early curators such as Fenollosa, and Okakura, who devoted their lives to building the department. Since the Asiatic department was built, the scope of the collection has been expanded, especially, under the curatorship of Okakura Kakuzo whose main concept was "Asia is one."³⁾

1) I use the word "Asian" rather than "Oriental," which is found in many text about the history of the Museum, which became the latter term that has too strong an association with European colonial power.

2) Jan Fontein, *Asiatic Art in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, (Massachusetts: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1982), p. 6.

3) This concept is based on the intercultural relationship among the Asian countries and

My main concerns in this thesis are with the establishment of the Asiatic department of the Museum of Fine Arts and the relationship between its American curators and Eastern arts. I intend to focus primarily on Far Eastern arts. First, I will talk about the renovations of the Asian galleries of the Museum and then follow with chapters about the collectors, curators, and the history of the Asiatic department. As a Korean woman, I always wonder how Asian objects crossed the Pacific and who brought them. Furthermore, how do these Asian objects function in a foreign land far away from their homeland. This thesis is a search for an answer to my question.

the motivation expanding the areas of the Asian collection across the Far East, the Middle East, and the Near East.

II. The Museum

The Museum has had several renovations during its history. The main renovation of the Asian galleries occurred twice, first in 1909 and later in 1983. In 1860's, as the Museum collection began to outgrow its original home, the first Museum building was built on a land given by the city of Boston in Copley Square and opened its doors to the public on July 4, 1876. Even though, in 1879 and 1889, additional sections were adjoined to the Copley Square building, it could not provide enough space for this quickly growing collection. The present location of the Museum between the Fenway and Huntington Avenue was purchased for the new Museum building.

The new museum was designed by Guy Lowell considering "the needs and requirements of its several departments as regards lighting, arrangement, and facility of study, taking each department separately and developing it as a unit."⁴) For this purpose, each department completed a report based on the needs of their department, addressing matters of space and light, storage, and study facilities.

The new museum building opened to the public in 1909 and the Asiatic department was assigned its own spaces and the corridor on the

4) "The Museum Building", *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*, vol. 1, no.4, (September 1903)

main floor at the left side of the entrance lobby. The Morse collection of Japanese pottery was installed in the corridor which had been especially designed for the collection. Other Asian galleries were designed for the purpose of presenting the circumstances of the objects' origins. To carry out this idea, the galleries were decorated with natural wood, plaster, and sliding screens of paper to suggest the objects' origins. The objects were installed in chronological sequence beginning with the art of China representing the origin of Asiatic art arts and proceeding to works from Japan and Korea.

Another big change happened in 1978. The Asian galleries were closed for renovation and reinstallation under the principal supervision of the architectural firm of I. M. Pei and Partners. When the Asian galleries in the West wing opened in 1981, the current Asian wing was presented. In the new design each Far Eastern country has its own gallery. Chinese objects are displayed on the second floor; the Korean gallery has been located on the first floor, and Japanese galleries have been relocated to both floors.

The most distinguishing aspect of this renovation is the arrangement of art by nation of origin. The Japanese government and Korean-USA Centennial Program Committee donated funds for the renovation of the their country's respective galleries. In this way, the

Asiatic department confirmed its importance as a mediator for the purpose of cultural exchange.

III. The Museum Men

1. Edward Sylvester Morse

Edward Sylvester Morse (1830 - 1925) was a pioneer who collected Japanese objects and donated them to the Museum of Fine Arts for the appreciation of the Museum visitors. He was a great collector as well as a renowned zoologist. His scientist's skill to collect, classify, and catalogue materials can be seen in the systematic collection of Japanese art where each object represent an example of a type of work in a variety of examples.

Though evolutionism was not widely accepted at the time, his admiration of Darwin's theories led him to study brachiopods, a species of marine worms, by collecting their fossils as well as living marine worms which were available in several varieties. Hearing that a large variety of brachiopods inhabited Japanese waters, led him to go to Japan to study the evolution of brachiopods. This opportunity, unexpectedly, brought Morse into the world of the Japanese art.

He arrived in Yokohama, Japan, in June of 1877 for a three-month collecting expedition. Morse traveled by train from Yokohama to Tokyo where he would spend his time during his stay. His first activity in Japan

happened accidentally.

"As his train heading to Tokyo passed through the rural neighborhood of Omori, Morse noticed that the tracks cut through neolithic shell mounds."⁵) He soon conducted the first archaeological excavation in the history of Japan. This led the Japanese authorities to see the value of Morse as a source of new Western science. When he applied for a permission for another month in Japan, Japanese authorities offered Morse a position in charge of establishing a department of zoology at the New Imperial University of Tokyo and founding a museum of natural history with the two-year contract and a high salary. Soon after Morse accepted the Japanese Government's offer, his laboratory was established in Enoshima and his life in Japan began.

"In the late fall of 1878 Morse's nerves and digestion from his tiresome work over the previous ten years in America began to bother him."⁶) It was at this time that Morse became aware of the beauty of Japanese pottery. His Tokyo doctor prescribed a daily walk and, during one of these walks, Morse's eye was caught by saucers in the shape of a shell. As a scientist Morse had an observant and analytical eye for details but no aesthetic sense for beauty of objects. With great excitement, he would

5) Dorothy G. Wayman, *Edward Sylvester Morse*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1942), pp. 235-236.

6) *Ibid.*, p. 258.

show his findings to his Japanese friends who knew that they were cheap, not old, and valuable as Morse believed.

Soon, "Morse became aware that there was a cult of pottery in Japan and that good pottery was to be recognized by an incised potter's mark."⁷⁾ For Morse's accurate eye, it was enough easy to catch the image of the various potter's marks, even though he could not read Japanese. He would become passionate about collecting Japanese pottery and develop a pleasure for recognizing real treasures. He collected, catalogued, and classified Japanese pottery as carefully as he did his shells.

Morse began to hold Sunday afternoon lectures with Ninagawa Noritane, a learned antiquarian and student of ceramics. During these lectures, Ninagawa "would examine the pottery that Morse had bought during his walks of the previous week, instruct him in the "feel" of clays from different provinces, the methods of firing glazes, and sketch for him the signatures of famous potters."⁸⁾ This would become the first serious examination of Japanese pottery by a western scholar. The pieces formed the beginning of the Morse collection of Japanese pottery and the basis for Asian collection of the Museum of Fine Arts.

When Morse began collecting pottery, Japanese people were selling

7) Ibid., p. 259.

8) Walter Muir Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: A Centennial History*, 2 vols., (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1970), p. 103.

off their collections for cash to live on, to study the new western learning, and to establish businesses. This made Morse feel sad for the Japanese people. His pity of Japan's ignorance of its treasures was expressed in a conversation with Fenollosa, Bigelow, and Okakura. He said,

Many fine things of Japanese art are now on the market, like those we are buying. It is like the lifehood of Japan seeping from a hidden wound. They do not know how sad it is to let their beautiful treasures leave their country.⁹⁾

As an the only Japanese in the conversation, Okakura must have felt sharp pang at Morse's words. In 1884, the law of National Treasures preventing from illegal export of Japanese artworks was established through Okakura's effort.

When Morse returned to New England late in 1879, after two years in Japan, his knowledge of Japanese culture was incomparable. His lectures at Lowell Institute in 1881-82 and 1883-84 inspired many Bostonians travel to Japan. One of these was Dr. William Strugis Bigelow whose collection is still significant in the Museum. Unfortunately, Morse's passion for collecting pottery in Japan put him into financial difficulties. He could not pay his mortgage or his other bills. However, his primary consideration,

9) Wayman, *Edward Sylvester Morse*, p. 282.

always, was the maintenance his Japanese pottery collection. "Except minimum household expenses, he spent every penny for safeguarding and displaying the Japanese pottery and, addition to, he borrowed money to build an annex for his pottery."¹⁰ Despite his troubles, his financial situation could not dampen his passion for Japanese pottery and his pride in his collection. In his journal he wrote,

the more I see of these various collections, the more I think of the wonderful character of mine. All the collection here and in Paris will not equal mine in value and hardly in number.¹¹

The uniqueness of his collection originated from his origin as a scientist rather than a collector. With the attitude of a scientist, he classified his ceramics historically, so he could have examples of almost every period and style and practice most collectors would not follow.

Even though several museums and wealthy collectors in New York, Cleveland, and Chicago, showed interest in purchasing his collection, Morse wanted Boston to have it as a unit. Morse's collection of Japanese pottery was acquired in 1890 by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. During the same year, he was offered the position of director of the Peabody Academy

10) Ibid., pp. 272-273.

11) Ibid., p. 305.

of Science in Salem, where he worked until his death in 1925. Also, he spent at least one day a week in the Museum as Keeper of pottery from the time the collection was sent there in 1892.

During the latter part of his life, Morse and Margarette Brooks, his long-time secretary, worked continuously on two books, a catalogue of Morse's Japanese pottery, published by the Museum, and *Japan Day by Day*, an edited version of his diary. Both of them were published in two volumes and have become great sources for understanding Japan and its pottery.

2. Ernest Francisco Fenollosa

Ernest Francisco Fenollosa was born on February 18, 1853, in Salem, Massachusetts. He was the son of Spanish musician and he spent his childhood reading poems. In the fall of 1870, he enrolled at Harvard College. "Harvard studies provided the idiom which Fenollosa would use in a lifelong search for a world-view spacious enough to contain the far reaches of aesthetic and religious experience."¹²⁾ Furthermore, the perspective on the creation of art of Charles Carroll Everett, a Harvard

12) Lawrence W. Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East and American Culture*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 21.

professor, characterized Fenollosa's inner ideal of Far Eastern art. Everett's perspective was that "the critic must not stand on the outside and apply external and foreign measures."¹³ Considering Fenollosa's understanding of Far Eastern arts deeply, it is clear that Fenollosa took an advice of his mentor.

Fenollosa began to study drawing and painting at the Museum of Fine Arts in the spring of 1877. While taking classes, he was recommended as a Professor of Philosophy and Political Economy at Tokyo University, Japan's new institution for the modernization of the country. This opportunity to build his career as an expert of Japan was made possible by Morse. The contract was for two years, but it was renewed twice. Before sailing to Japan, Fenollosa was married to Lizzie Goodhue Millett in June, 1878, and they arrived in Japan together in July, of the same year.

When Fenollosa went to Japan, the hunger of Japanese people for Westernization was at its height. Japanese people were strongly attracted to Western culture and ignored their own culture. The field of art was no exception. Second-rate craftsmen were busy producing cheap curios for export, while the product of first-rate artists was neglected.

As Western-educated Japanese returned and took on lecturer's

¹³) Ibid., p. 27.

positions, Fenollosa devoted more time to his special interest in the art. As in the case of Morse, his eye was first caught by the cheap curios of the market place. But then, Kaketo Kaneko, a former noble who returned from study at Harvard, deepened Fenollosa's appreciation of Japanese art by showing him private Japanese collections.

Fenollosa first was drawn to paintings. This is not a surprise considering his formal classes in painting. His collection of paintings was meant to complement his mentor Morse's Japanese pottery collection. However, when Fenollosa showed his purchases to Kaneko, Kaneko advised him that the paintings were poor imitations of famous works. Then Kaneko arranged for Fenollosa to see the art collection of Kaneko's former lord, Marquis Kuroda. Lawrence mentioned Fenollosa's study with Kuroda collection,

The Kuroda collection was dazzling, rich in the authentic works of such masters as Sesshu and Motonobu. The Kuroda collection set Fenollosa off on the explorations and speculations of a lifetime. With the special help of two students, Nagao Ariga and Kakuzo Okakura, he undertook systematic investigation of these beautiful paintings and of the circumstances of their creation.¹⁴⁾

14) Ibid., p. 49.

Tokyo did not provide Fenollosa with enough exposure to Japanese art, so, he looked forward traveling around Japan to search for more art treasures. In the summers of 1880 and 1881, he began traveling, first in Nara and Kyoto. He visited all the temples and castles he could find to examine old paintings and statuary which were undervalued by their owners. During the first summer trip, he bought the 6-panel korin screen now in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, as one of the greatest pieces in the collection.

His contract was renewed in 1880 and 1882. In 1884 he became Professor of Philosophy and Logic, and his own artistic activities included the study of Japanese art. By 1884, Fenollosa had acquired a number of fabulous paintings. Many of them were very old and had a rare sensibility with equally rare opportunities for purchase.

He became a passionate collector of paintings, buying everything that he could afford. At this moment, opportunities were many. Private collections were sold in the market for the education or business of families. Prominent traditional artists like the Kano family no longer had support, and faces great financial difficulties. These conditions provided Fenollosa with great opportunities to collect fabulous artworks, including his painting collection of the Kano school.¹⁵⁾ He was honorarily adopted

¹⁵⁾ Kano School is the family of artist who painted in a style developed in Japan in the

into the Kano family and received the name Kano Teitan in 1884.

When Fenollosa acquired paintings, there were no laws which defined national treasures or prohibited exporting them. This would evoke moral discomfort at so easily acquiring national treasure. In his letter to Morse in the fall of 1884, he expressed his discomfort:

Already people here are saying that my collection must be kept here in Japan for the Japanese. I have bought a number of the very greatest treasures secretly. The Japanese as yet don't know that I have them. I wish I could see them all safely housed forever in the Boston Art Museum. And yet if the Emperor of the Mombusho [Department of Education] should want to buy my collection, wouldn't it be my duty to humanity, all things considered, to let them have it? What do you think?¹⁶⁾

Without any information or law, it was a difficult question to be answered and the Japanese government made no offer to purchase Fenollosa's

15th-19th centuries. For seven generations, over 200 years, the leading Japanese artists came from this family. The school arose at a time when Chinese cultural ideals were dominant, but by this time there had been a long history of ink painting in Japan. The Kano style, Chinese though it appears in subject matter and ink technique, was actually thoroughly Japanese in its form of expression. The first Kano was an amateur artist of the samurai class and named Kagenobu. His son, Masanobu (1434-1530) became the accepted first generation, but it was Motonobu (1476-1559), his son, who crystallized the Kano style.

16) Chisolm, *Fenollosa: The Far East and American Culture*, p. 21.

collection. Finally, Fenollosa would make his decision easier even in an uncomfortable situation. Fenollosa's stay in Japan gave him the freedom to explore into Japanese art. Even, "ten years earlier or ten years later his work would have been impossible."¹⁷⁾ But, when the Japanese planned to replace all foreign teachers with trained Japanese, Fenollosa made a decision to return to the United States and build a career in lecturing and writing.

In late 1886, Fenollosa negotiated for the sale of his paintings to Charles Goddard Weld, a wealthy Bostonian, with the understanding that the collection would be located in the Museum of Fine Arts, in Boston and the paintings would be described officially as the Fenollosa-Weld Collection. In July 1889, Fenollosa was offered a position to take charge of establishing a department of Japanese art at the Museum of Fine Arts. As curator of the Japanese department, he was in charge of his own collection of paintings as well as the whole collection.

Soon after renewing Fenollosa's contract with the Museum in 1895, his career in Boston end due to his private problems. When Fenollosa applied for a six-month leave of absence, the executive committee granted him an indefinite leave and later Fenollosa's resignation was accepted by the full board of trustees effective April, 1896. In the 1890s, Boston society

¹⁷⁾ Ibid., p. 86.

had strong conservative social attitudes, so did the museum administration. Fenollosa's divorce and remarriage was shocking to polite society. On October 2, 1895, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Fenollosa had divorced Lizzie Millett Fenollosa and on December 28, and he married Mary McNeil Scott, his former assistant at the Museum. After leaving in 1896, he never returned to Boston and never again held a position in a museum or university. During the rest of his life, he supported himself by lecturing and selling some of his Japanese collection.

3. Bigelow and others

Before the law of National Treasures was made in Japan by Japanese authorities, immense quantities of Japanese artworks were purchased by Westerners without any restriction. Dr. William Sturgis Bigelow and Dr. Charles Goddard Weld were two of the most enthusiastic collectors of Japanese art. They were impressed by Morse's lectures in Lowell Institute and each found their individual taste in Japanese art which characterized their later collections.

William Sturgis Bigelow graduated from Harvard College with an M. D. in 1874 and went to Europe for five years of further medical study. Becoming a doctor due to excessive pressure from his father, Dr. Bigelow

was less interested in medicine. Instead, Dr. Bigelow's interest in Japanese art grew seriously after hearing a lecture on this subject by Morse. Even though he already had a taste of Japanese art during his study in Europe, the Lowell Institute series on Japan was the direct motivation for becoming Bigelow to an enthusiastic collector of Japanese art. "Dr. Bigelow asked Edward S. Morse to spend a month with him in the summer of 1881 at Tuckernuck Island and this association increased Dr. Bigelow's desire to go to Japan."¹⁸⁾

They sailed to Japan together in May 1882 and were greeted by Ernest Fenollosa and Okakura Kakuzo. In Japan Dr. Bigelow, who was the grandson of a rich China Trade merchant, was able to pursue everything of high quality within his reach. His enthusiasm for Japanese culture and religion led him to his stay for seven years, longer than any other. In Japan, his taste was broadened to appreciate various kinds of Japanese art objects. Unlike the collection of Fenollosa which consisted mainly of paintings, Bigelow's collection consisted of sculptures, swords, sword fittings, textiles, and lacquerwork. Additionally, Dr. Bigelow was fascinated by Buddhist philosophy, so, he accompanied Fenollosa on his trip in search of temple treasures. Upon his return to Boston in 1891, he was appointed to the board of trustees of the Museum of Fine Arts and was annually

¹⁸⁾ Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: A Centennial History*, vol. I, p. 108.

reappointed until his death in 1926.

The effect Asian philosophy had on Dr. Bigelow's life is apparent in his funeral ceremony. Whitehill described on Dr. Bigelow's death;

On his death, his body with rosary in his left hand was clothed in the cloak that Buddhist priests of the Shingon¹⁹⁾ sect commonly wear when engaged in ritual practice and burned. Half of his ashes with the rosary was sent to Homyoin-Miidera temple in Japan.²⁰⁾

Even his last step on the earth was full admiration for the Asian spirit.

One of Bigelow's most achievements was advising Dr. Weld to buy Fenollosa' collection. Dr. Charles Goddard Weld was a second Boston physician who traveled to the far east. He like Dr. Bigelow, was the heir of a China Trade merchant, and had no financial difficulties to prevent him from collecting high quality objects. He received his M. D. from Harvard

19) Shingon is an esoteric Buddhist sect that has had a considerable following in Japan since its introduction from China in the 9th century. It may be considered an attempt to reach the eternal wisdom of the Buddha that was not expressed in words, thus, not in his public teaching. The sect believes that this wisdom may be developed and realized through special ritual means employing body, speech, and mind, such as the use of symbolical gestures, mystical syllables, and mental concentration. The whole is intended to arouse an immediate sense of the pervading spiritual presence of the Buddha that lies inherent in all living things.

20) Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: A Centennial History*, vol. I, p. 111.

medical school, seven years after Dr. Bigelow, and became a surgeon. After retirement as a surgeon, he traveled widely in Asia. Like other Bostonians under the impression of Morse, he went to Japan, where he became an active collector of swords, sword ornaments, and other Japanese objects.

Not only Dr. Bigelow and Dr. Weld were influenced by Edward S. Morse's lectures on Japan. These lectures also led other Bostonians to go there. For example, Mr. and Mrs. John Lowell Gardner had Morse lecturing in their music room and went to Japan in 1883. Their nephew John Gardner, who collected Chinese porcelains, also spent time in Japan and Korea from 1887-1889. Considering Gardener's case, it is not difficult to assume that some Americans may have gone to China and Korea while visiting Japan purchase Chinese and Korean objects. Conversely, many talented Japanese crossed the Pacific and contributed their knowledge of Japanese and Asian art to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Okakura Kakuzo and Kojiro Tomita, two of the most gifted curators in the history of Museum and several conservators of Japanese objects all came from Japan.

Okakura Kakuzo was first a translator and later a friend of Morse and Fenollosa. He accompanied Fenollosa on many of his excursions in search of temple treasures. Fenollosa relied Okakura not only for

translation, but also to interpret and date the paintings. Later, Okakura headed the new Arts School of Ueno, Tokyo, which would link the traditional past of Japan with new systems of art instruction. In 1897 he resigned from the position and opened the Nippon Bijitsuon, the Japanese Museum of Fine Arts, at Yanaka, in suburbs of Tokyo. The Nippon Bijitsuon was based on the assumption that "the old art of Asia is more valid than that of any modern school, inasmuch as the process of idealism and not of imitation."²¹⁾

Okakura recognized the value of the art of his own country more than any other man and understood the interaction of cultures within Asia. His idea of cultural connection within Asia countries was simplified by one sentence "Asia is one." He made several visits to China and India and became familiar with their religions, arts, philosophies, and histories using all to strengthen his concept of Asia as a whole.

Okakura came to Boston in 1904 to study the Museum collections. The next year, he was appointed advisor to the Asian department, and, in November, curator. During his curatorship, he played an important role in the department, expanding the eras of the Asian collections beginning with Chinese art. Jan Fontein defined him "undoubtedly as one of the greatest connoisseurs of Far Eastern art of this time, a man with a remarkably

21) Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: A Centennial History*, vol. 2, p.126.

wide range of interests, who was equally well versed in Chinese and Japanese art."²²)

²²) Fontein, *Asiatic Art in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston*, p. 10.

IV. Asiatic Department

1. 1870 - 1900

When the Museum of Fine Arts in Copley Square reopened on July 1, 1879 after the renovation of the West wing, the expanded loan room was renamed the West room. The West room was used for the exhibition of a variety of objects lent to the museum by generous donors. Many of those loans were Japanese art objects such as pottery, porcelain, bronzes, and so on. In 1880, Dr. William Sturgis Bigelow lent 482 Japanese objects in various ranges from his Japanese collection and the following year 509 Japanese objects. With an additional 100 Chinese objects including: porcelains, lacquers, bronzes, and jades from Edward Cunningham of Milton, whose family had China Trade connections, the West room would have an outstanding Asian collection. The generous behavior of Dr. Bigelow and Cunningham, and other lenders and donors lead to the renovation of the Museum building again in 1886 to address the shortage of gallery space. This time, the Japanese room and the corridor were set up for the Asian objects.

When Dr. Bigelow decided to donate his collection, which was partly rented to the Museum in 1886, not only did he send it to the

Museum but left it to the Museum in his will. He also persuaded his friend Dr. Charles Goddard Weld to buy the Fenollosa collection and bequeath it to the Museum. These two collections were deposited in the Museum with the will of future bequest in 1889. The following year, the Morse collection was deposited on loan. With the collections of three prominent collectors, Morse, Bigelow, and Fenollosa-Weld, the Museum established an integral portion of the Asian collection and enjoyed preeminence in the field of Japanese art.

The Committee on the Museum stated its pride in the collection in its 1890 report:

No public museum offers so extraordinary a display of Japanese art as is found in the Japanese room and the corridor adjoining, for which we are indebted to Dr. William Strugis Bigelow and Dr. Charles Weld. In the corridor is hung a small portion of the Fenollosa Collection of Japanese paintings, lent to the Museum by Dr. Weld; it combines a complete historical series of original works, illustrating all the schools, and nearly all the leading masters of Japanese pictorial art. It includes also a considerable number of Chinese originals, and a few Korean,²³⁾ sufficient to illustrate the continental origin of much in Japanese art. Here, too, is the Morse Collection of Japanese pottery. In bringing the

23) I use "Korean" rather than "Corean", which is found in the original text. The term, "Korean," is accepted today rather than "Corean".

collection together, Mr. Morse has endeavored to secure specimens of every province in which pottery has been made, including work of every age; also the work of every maker and every variety of mark; and, further, to secure every kind of object made in pottery.

24)

Even though the museum had a prominent Japanese collection, the Japanese department was not established until the hiring of two outstanding experts in the area of Japanese art, Fenollosa and Morse. The department was created in March 1890 with the arrival of Fenollosa. Fenollosa was appointed Curator of the Japanese Department and served from 1890 to 1895. He spent his time "cataloging and installing the collections and in organizing a series of exhibitions of Japanese art which were undoubtedly the most significant held up to that time."²⁵⁾ These exhibitions included both objects from the Museum' own collections and objects loaned from Japanese Collectors. One of the last exhibitions organized by him was a traveling show of *lohan*²⁶⁾ paintings, Chinese Buddhist paintings dating from 1178 to 1184, from the Daitoku-ji, a

24) Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Art, Boston: A Centennial History*, vol. I, p. 82.

25) Jan Fontein, *Great Museums of the world: Museum of Fine Arts Boston*, (Newsweek, Inc. & Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1969), p. 13.

26) Lohan has a different name in Sanskrit, "Arhat." "Phali Arahant (one who is "fit" or "worthy"), in Buddhism, a perfected person, one who has gained insight into the true nature of existence and has achieved Nirvana (spiritual Enlightenment). The *arhat*, having freed himself from the bonds of desire, will not be reborn again.

buddhist temple, in Kyoto. Before the exhibition returned to Japan, the Daitoku-ji sold ten of the paintings to the Museum of Fine Arts to pay for urgent temple repairs. This purchase was one of the last services that Fenollosa contributed to the Museum before his dishonorable resignation from the Museum.

The Morse collection on loan, became the possession of the Museum by purchase in 1892 and has been kept there as a unit as Morse wished. "His collection was appraised at \$100,000 and by the spring of 1891 over \$50,000 had been raised for its purchase. Later, through the effort of the museum curator, General Charles G. Loring, who convinced his friends, including Dr. Bigelow, Dr. Weld, and probably Dr. Ross to donate part of the necessary money brought the end of the negotiation. Morse accepted with the smaller sum of \$76,000."²⁷⁾

In consideration of the smaller sum paid for his collection, Morse was appointed as a keeper of Japanese pottery at the Museum with a small annual stipend of \$1,000. For his first ten years at the Museum, Morse regularly worked on the *Catalogue of the Morse Collection of Japanese Pottery*, the first monumental catalogue to be published by the Museum of Fine Arts. His service at the Museum lasted for thirty-three years until his death in 1925.

²⁷⁾ Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: A Centennial History*, vol. I, p. 122.

Arthur Wesley Dow was assigned as a part-time assistant in the Department from 1893 to 1895 and returned to the Museum as a Keeper of Japanese Paintings and Prints in 1897. He arranged a few exhibitions of screens by artists of the Sesshu²⁸⁾, Kano, Kose, Takuma²⁹⁾, and Tosa³⁰⁾ schools during his tenure. Some of the exhibited works were lent by Denman W. Ross, one of the greatest donors in the Museum's history. After a short stay in the Museum, Dow left to teach art education in Pratt Institute in 1899. The second Curator of the Japanese Department, Walter Mason Cabot, was hired in 1899, four years after Fenollosa's resignation. He served until 1902.

After the departure of Ernest Fenollosa the rapid growth of the collections slowed down until the arrival of Okakura Kakuzo, Fenollosa's most gifted Japanese pupil. The ten years between Fenollosa's departure and Okakura's arrival in the Museum would seem to be "a sleeping time" waiting for another big jump into a new era of Asian art at the Museum.

28) Sesshu is an artist of the Muromachi period who is one of the greatest masters of the Japanese art of sumi, or ink painting. His style is distinguished for its force and vehemence of brush stroke as well as by its intensity of conception.

29) Takuma school is Japanese school of Buddhist painting that flourished in Japan from the 12th to the 14th centuries during the Kamakura period.

30) Tosa school is family of Japanese artists forming an official school contemporary with that of the Kano family, both of which claimed descent from great 15th-century masters of Japanese art. Both schools lasted until the end of the Edo period (1603-1867). The Tosa school devoted its talents to subjects and techniques traditional to the indigenous art of Japan, and, in theory, provided the official painters attached to the court.

Okakura Kakuzo, a friend of Fenollosa and Morse, awakened interest in Asian art at the Museum with his lively activities growth of the Museum's knowledge of Asian art, leading to the Chinese art collection as well as the further development of the Japanese collection.

2. 1900 - 1930

Before Okakura Kakuzo came to the Museum, the Museum was staffed with the curator, Paul Chalfin, and two secretaries. In 1903, the Japanese department was renamed as the Department of Japanese and Chinese art. Paul Chalfin left the curatorship in 1905 and Okakura became Advisor to the department. Before he became departmental advisor, Okakura went to Japan and made a number of purchases for the museum and brought photographs of other important objects which were a gift from the Imperial Museum at Tokyo. In November 1905 he was hired as Curator of the Asiatic Department and held this position until his death, at the age of fifty, in 1913.

Okakura's belief, "Asia is one," can be seen as the ultimate purpose of his curatorship. Until Okakura came to the Museum, the Asian collection consisted mostly of Japanese objects. Okakura's first step was to expand into other fields of Asian art beginning with Chinese art. Okakura

journeyed to China in 1893, and he became deeply interested in the art of that country leading to the first ambitious efforts to assemble a collection of Chinese art at the Museum. In China, Okakura was accompanied by Hayasaki Kokichi, the son of his step-sister, and later Hayasaki became the Museum's agent in China. Okakura's activities to introduce Japanese and Chinese arts to the Western world were the most important accomplishments of his curatorship. He wrote in the Museum Bulletin, January 1905,

Japanese and Chinese art require to be interpreted from within like European art, and their productions are to be treated neither as curiosities nor phantasie, except by the inattentive. I hope that the Museum, through the publication of a catalogue and through lectures on the collection, will afford full facilities in the future to the lovers and students of art in general, for forming a deeper conception of that of the East.³¹⁾

Another great concern was the conservation of the Asian collection which had remained without professional treatment until that time. He also said that,

31) Okakura Kakuzo, *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*, vol. III, no. 1, (January 1905)

The classification and cataloging of the whole collection will require a great effort in the immediate future, while the preservation of the objects under the special climatic conditions of this country needs a vast amount of care. Many things, in fact, are in instant need of repair.³²⁾

Several Japanese conservators visited the Museum. Shisui Rokkaku and Kakuya Okabe were in charge of cataloging the collections of lacquer and metalwork, cleaning and repairing objects, and building special boxes for the objects. Motokichi Tamura was responsible for repairing and remounting many screens and Japanese scroll paintings and was succeeded by Yokichi Kinoshita, who returned to Japan in 1932.

During Okakura's curatorship, three important collections came to the department. First, in 1906, the collection of Dr. Ross, and then in 1911, those of Dr. Charles Goddard Weld and Dr. William Strugis Bigelow became the part of the permanent collection of the Museum. Dr. Ross's collection consisted of more than 1,800 Japanese prints, nearly 100 Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan paintings, and many Japanese sword-guards, bronze vessels, and examples of wood-work.

³²⁾ Ibid.

The collections of Dr. Charles Goddard Weld and Dr. William Strugis Bigelow, which had been kept in the Museum since 1890, greatly enhanced the department's collection in both quality and number. Dr. Weld's collection totaled four thousand Chinese and Japanese paintings including eight hundred and thirty-eight paintings purchased from Fenollosa. Dr. Bigelow's gift was comprised of twenty-six thousand pieces such as Japanese prints, lacquer, swords, metal work, Chinese glass, and Buddhist and decorative sculptures. At the time, the department presented almost all periods and styles of Japanese and Chinese art given the immense quantities of these collections.

The most important contribution to the department that Okakura made was after his death. Dr. Ross gave the monumental statue from the Pai-ma ssu Temple, [the White Horse Temple], in Lo-yang, China in memory of Okakura. Okakura had seen this sculpture in China in 1906. However, when he returned in 1910, it had disappeared. During the interval between these visits, Dr. Ross rediscovered it in Paris and bought it. The statue came to the Museum to memorialize one of the finest scholar of Asian art. Additionally, some of the greatest works of art in Okakura's private collection in Japan were brought to the Museum and became possessions of the Museum. The Dai-itoku Myo-o, the Miroku³³⁾ by

33) Miroku is the Future Buddha. According to Buddhist tradition, there have been many

Kaikei,³⁴⁾ and the beautiful Korean Medicine Buddha statue, some of the greatest treasures of the Museum, are from his collection.

Gifts from the generous donors were not the only reason for the Museum's great Asian art collection. The freedom given to curators in terms of collecting objects, lead to become one of the most prominent collections in the world. "The Trustees, wisely placing full confidence in what we now know have been the best connoisseurs of their time, gave them full freedom of action, a policy that led, at a time of great opportunities, to spectacular results."³⁵⁾ Another example of the freedom the Museum allowed its curators can be seen in the letter that John Ellerton Lodge, who became Curator after Okakura, wrote to Hayasaki on August 18, 1916:

I am particularly anxious that, in prosecuting your labors for the Museum, you should be relieved as much as possible from any sense of constraint you may have regarding the prices you pay and the number of things you buy. we are interested primarily and above all in the quality of what we receive from

Buddhas in the past and will be many more to come. Miroku resides at present as a bodhisativa("Buddha-to-be") in the Tusita heaven and when the teachings of Gautama Buddha have completely decayed he will descend to earth to again preach the dharma("law").

34) Kaikei(fl. 1183-1236) is a sculptor who did much to establish the traditional pattern of Buddhist sculpture.

35) Fontein, *Asiatic Art in the Museum of Fine Arts*, p. 10.

you, and that the number of things you buy, their prices, and the expenses, are matters of secondary importance provided, always, that the things themselves are, as they should be, absolutely first-rate of their respective kinds.³⁶⁾

By hiring the most gifted curators of the time beginning with Fenollosa, Okakura, and later Tomita, and by supporting truly them, the Museum built an Asian collection unrivaled in the World.

In 1921, the Museum acquired another great collection of Japanese art from the William S. and John T. Spaulding. This collection which consisted of more than six thousand Japanese prints was considered to be one of the finest in the world. The Spauldings began to acquire Japanese prints in 1909. They first acquired a fine print by Hiroshige³⁷⁾ and this purchase became the motivation for this great collection. This collection was assembled with all the significant categories and artists represented in the historical evolution of Ukiyo-e.³⁸⁾ The concern of the Spauldings brothers was mainly the preservation of their fragile prints, so, they suggested that the Museum not to put them on exhibition. Their concern

36) Ibid., pp. 10-11.

37) Hiroshige is a Japanese artist, one of the last great Ukiyo-e masters of the colour wood-block print, whose genius for landscape compositions was first recognized in the West by the Impressionists and Postimpressionist.

38) Ukiyo-e is one of the most important Edo period schools of art that flourished in 17th and 18th century Japan. Although the Ukiyo-e is particularly associated with the popular art of woodblock prints, it really designates a style that originated in painting.

was "to protect their delicate fugitive pigments from the destructive effects of light of all sorts, as well as from the dangers of climate change or extremes in humidity."³⁹ This became the last acquisition for the first quarter of this century.

The curator, John Ellerton Lodge, divided his time, for many years equally, between the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. until he decided to devote himself to the directorship of the Freer Gallery in 1931. He was succeeded by Kakuza Tomita, who had joined the Museum, as an assistant in 1907.

III. After 1930

Kojiro Tomita became Curator of the department in 1931. Tomita, who was brought by Okakura to the United States, had been associated with the Museum as Assistant in Chinese and Japanese department since 1907 and later as Keeper in 1928. Tomita's service marked the longest period in the department as Curator, ending in 1962. With the help of Mr. Robert Treat Paine, Jr., Tomita cultivated the Okakura's interests, expanding all areas of the Asian collections. His main concern was raising the Chinese collection, particularly Chinese paintings, up to the level of the

³⁹) Fontein, *Asiatic Art in the Museum of Fine Arts*, p. 12.

Japanese collection. Mr. Robert Treat Paine, Jr., a Harvard graduate student of Chinese language and Asian art, was Associate Curator from 1932 to 1963. Before joining the Museum, he studied under professors in Japan and traveled extensively in Korea and China.

With the enhancement of the Chinese collection, Korean collection also grew noticeably during this period. In 1935 Bulletin, it was mentioned that,

year by year Korea's position in the field of Far Eastern art is becoming increasingly significant. Thanks to the wise policy of the Government of Korea and to the tireless activities of the society for the study of Korean antiquities. The artistic heritage of the peninsula is being literally brought to light from the depths of the earth.⁴⁰⁾

In order to discover and study Korean art, the Museum sponsored excavations in Korea and the department sent Tomita there to examine the findings.

In 1941 the Japanese galleries were closed and the valuable objects removed from displays immediately after the Pearl Harbor attack as a precaution against possible vandalism until 1947. Those galleries were

40) *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin*, vol. XXXIII, no. 199, (October 1935)

devoted for the temporary use by the school during their closing. Despite the closing of the galleries, some of Japanese paintings were on view in an exhibition, "A Thousand Years of Landscape East and West," in 1945. Once the galleries were reopened, American interest in Japanese art increased. According to 1946 Annual Report,

the presence of so many Americans in the Asia had increased rather than diminished the interest in Japanese art and more people are coming to the Museum for advice, for information, and for the enjoyment of Japanese art than ever before.⁴¹⁾

Strangely, the horrible experience of war with Japan may have caused average Americans to become interested in Japanese culture and art. A year after the Japanese galleries had been reopened, the department arranged the special exhibition, "The Art of Old Japan," including many objects which were seldom exhibited due to lack of space.

During the war, the purchases were modest, not to absence of desirable of objects in the market, but to lack of financial resources. However, in the years following the war, a remarkable variety of gifts were made. Those objects and funds from generous benefactors lead the department into another golden age. In 1946 the John Gardner Coolidge

⁴¹⁾ *The Museum of Fine Arts Annual Report*, 1946.

Collection of Chinese pottery and porcelain became the possession of the Museum. Mr. John Gardner Coolidge traveled in Asia until he was appointed Secretary of Legation in China in 1902. "During three years' residence in Peking, he developed a particular enthusiasm for Chinese porcelains, particularly of the blue and white variety."⁴²⁾

John Gardner Coolidge died in 1936 and his widow gave 115 of her husband's finest porcelains to the Museum of Fine Arts in his memory ten years later. In addition, she continued to add to this gift for nearly every year until her death in 1962 and bequeathed \$111,290 to be used for the enhancement of the Asiatic department. In 1946, the donation of 97 Japanese porcelains by Miss Lucy T. Aldrich was the next great gift following the Coolidge gift. This collection was to be able to strengthen the weak parts of the Museum's Japanese pottery collections. In fundraising, the department received a large sum, \$100,000, restricted to the purchase of Asiatic works of art from William F. Warden and Theodoro Wilbour.

During the curatorship of Tomita, the Asian collection once more expanded in 1950 when Charles Bain Hoyt (1889- 1949) bequeathed his large collection of Asian art, chiefly of Chinese and Korean ceramics. According to Fontein,

⁴²⁾ Whitehill, *The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: A Centennial History*, vols. II, p. 527.

As early as World War I Hoyt had become interested in Korean celadons, a field then scorned by most collectors of Oriental ceramics, and it is due to his foresight and munificence that the Museum now has one of the finest collection of Korean ceramics.⁴³⁾

Due to the bequest of the Hoyt collection of Chinese and Korean ceramics, the Far Eastern collection was again strengthened. His Korean collection included the most prominent types of Korean art such as Silla's⁴⁴⁾ golden artpieces, Koryo⁴⁵⁾ celadons, and Yi⁴⁶⁾ dynasty porcelains. The core of the Hoyt gift was a group of Koryo celadons which featured a twelfth-century vase of the maebyeong(plum blossom). These celadons are famous for their design of cranes and bamboo in inlaid black and white slip. The Hoyt collection contains a smaller selection of Silla wares and an excellent choice of Yi dynasty porcelains.

In the 1950's there were three main exhibitions of Far Eastern art.

43) Fontein, *Great Museums of the World: Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*, p. 15.

44) Silla is one of the three kingdoms into which ancient Korea was divided and the one that in 668 unified Korea under the Unified Silla dynasty (668-935).

45) Koryo is a kingdom that ruled the Korean peninsula from 935 to 1392. During this period the country began to form its own cultural tradition distinct from the rest of East Asia, and it is from the name Koryo that the Western word Korea is derived.

46) Yi is the last and longest imperial dynasty (1392-1910) of Korea. Founded by General Yi Song-gye, who established the capital at Hanyang (present-day Seoul), the kingdom was named Chosen after the state of the same name that had dominated the Korean peninsula in ancient times.

supported, Japan, Korea, and China respectively. In 1953, the "Exhibition of Japanese Paintings and Sculpture" initiated by Mr. John D. Rockefeller, the third, was organized under the sponsorship of the Commission for the Protection of Cultural Property of the Japanese Government and various fine art museums in the United States. Many of the paintings and sculpture in the exhibition were of superb quality and were largely drawn from collections belonging to Governmental institutions, religious bodies, and public museums. This was an opportunity, not only to see many great masterpieces of Japanese art, but also re-evaluate the museum's Japanese collection.

In the autumn of 1956 Robert T. Paine went to Korea in the company of Alan Priest, Curator of Far Eastern art at the Metropolitan Museum, to make the selection for the exhibition, "Masterpieces of Korean art," which was held in the Museum and seven other museums in the United States in 1958. However, because of the division of the country, no objects from North Korea were available and certain monumental temple carvings could not be shipped across the ocean. Nevertheless, with the cooperation of President Syngman Rhee and the Korean Government, some 187 gold objects, early stoneware, bronze and gilt-bronze small statues, ceramics, and paintings were sent to the United States where they would be presented for the first time. This was also the first time that

American public had an opportunity to appreciate the arts of Korea on a grand scale.

The year 1961 end with another great Asiatic loan exhibition, "Chinese Art Treasures," a selection of 231 objects from the Chinese National Palace Museum and the Chinese National Central Museum in Taichung, Taiwan, sent by the Government of the Republic China was shown at five American museums. This was the greatest exhibition of Chinese paintings ever seen in the Western world.

Kojiro Tomita became a citizen of the United States in 1953, where he had lived for forty-five years. He took a trip to Japan for three months after he became a citizen and received the Order of the Sacred Treasure, Third Class by the Emperor and Empress of Japan. This award, which was the highest honor given since the end of the war to a Japanese residing outside of Japan, was presented for Tomita's outstanding effort to introduce Japanese art and culture to the United States and to promote friendly relations between the two countries. In 1963, after fifty-five years in the Museum, thirty-one of which had been as Curator of Asiatic Art, Kojiro Tomita became Curator Emeritus. He was succeeded by Robert Treat Paine.

Unfortunately, Paine's curatorship was brief because of his death in 1965. His particular interest was the field of Japanese art, especially prints.

This lead him to become one of the international editors of the journal *Ukiyo-e Art* and co-author of the Pelican volume *History of Japanese Art and Architecture*. During the period of Paine's curatorship, the collection of Japanese prints was systematically expanded to include contemporary works.

Jan Fontein, formerly Curator of Asiatic Art at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, succeeded Paine in 1966. He was deeply concerned with the art of China and, in 1973, presented the exhibition "Unearthing China's Past" in response to increasing public interest. He also served as a director from 1975 to 1987 during the period that the Museum renovated the Asian galleries to use modern display techniques.

V. Conclusion

Since opening its door to the West, the traditional Eastern world has gradually ceased to exist. The influx of Western culture drew East in to an advanced material world. At the same time, exotic Eastern culture convey the new taste of the world to the Western people. In their attraction to the new world, Eastern people temporarily lost their identity and sold their cultural heritage to the West. On the contrary, Western people did not lose their identity while exploring an unknown culture. Ironically, Western fascination with Eastern culture awakened the Asian people to the importance of their own heritage and gave them the opportunity to appreciate their culture in a setting far away from its origins.

The early history of the Asian department was the most active time for establishing the Asian collection. Since Eastern countries have become part of the modern world, their efforts to protect their heritage have become strong, and the acquisition of the Asian objects for the Museum collection has been become more difficult. However, it is true that the modernization of Asian countries during the late 19th and 20th centuries provided an opportunity for the Museum to establish one of the greatest

Asian collections in the world. In more recent time, it has become difficult to collect new objects because of financial or research baners, therefore, the department curators have concentrated on cataloging, preserving, and interpretating the Asiatic collection for the purpose of the study by students and scholars. Year after year, scholars from all over the world, including the East, come to the Museum to study the works of art on display and the vast amount of material in its storage rooms. An increasing number of Japanese visitors have come to Boston in recent year, to see the treasures from their motherland. This phenomenon bears witness to the continuing importance of the Museum's Asian collection.

The Asian collection was made by several Bostonians who devoted their lives to the beauty of the Asian artworks and Boston as a cultural depository. Their passion created a new home for the ancient art from the East. As adopted-children to wealthy parents, Asian art functions as a bridge between Eastern aesthetic and Western intellect.



Okakura Kakuzo
(1862-1913)



Kojiro Tomita
(1890-1976)



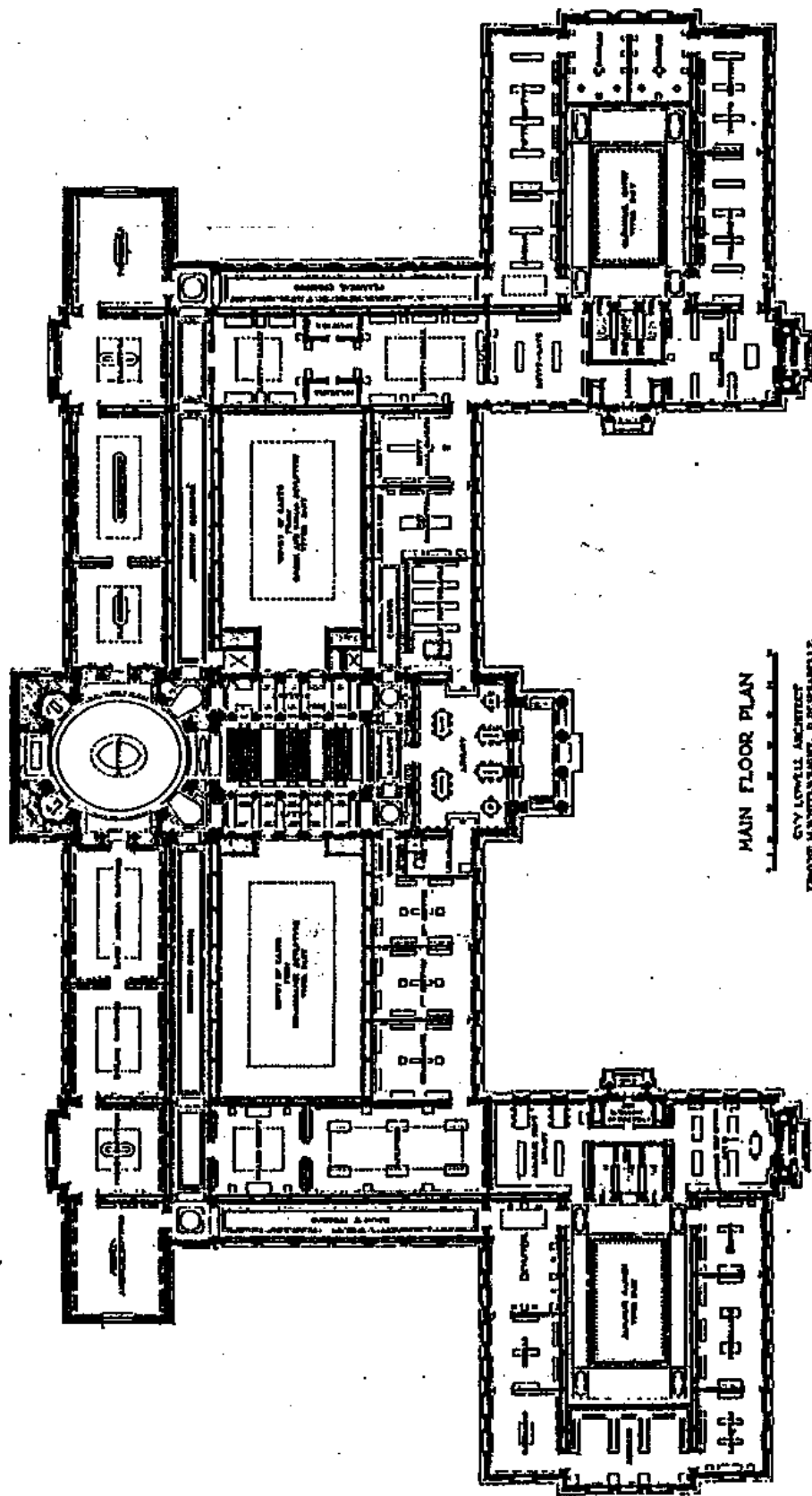
William Sturgis Bigelow (1850-1926)



Edward Sylvester Morse (1830-1925)



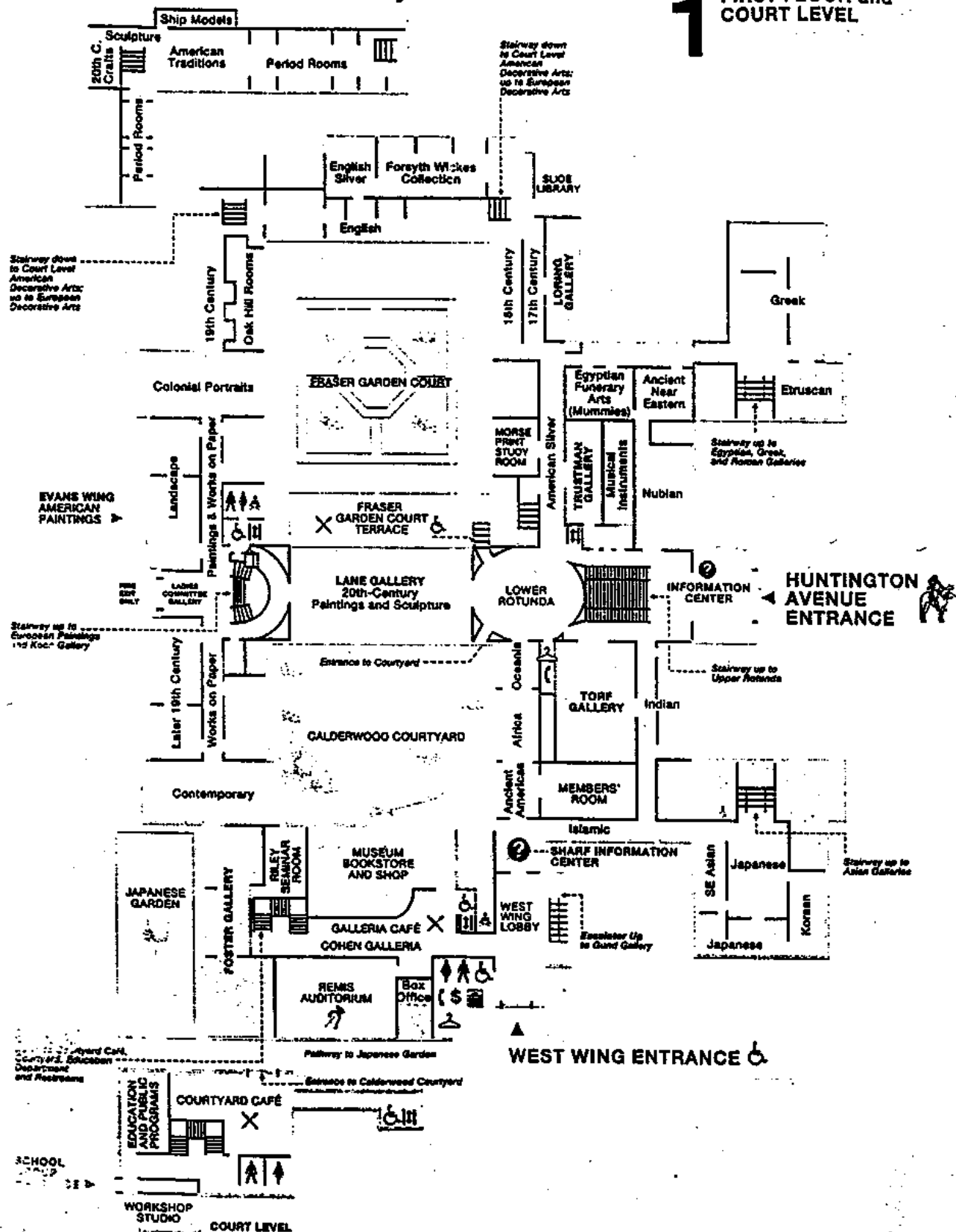
Ernest Francisco Fenollosa (1853-1908)



The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Floor Plan, 1909.

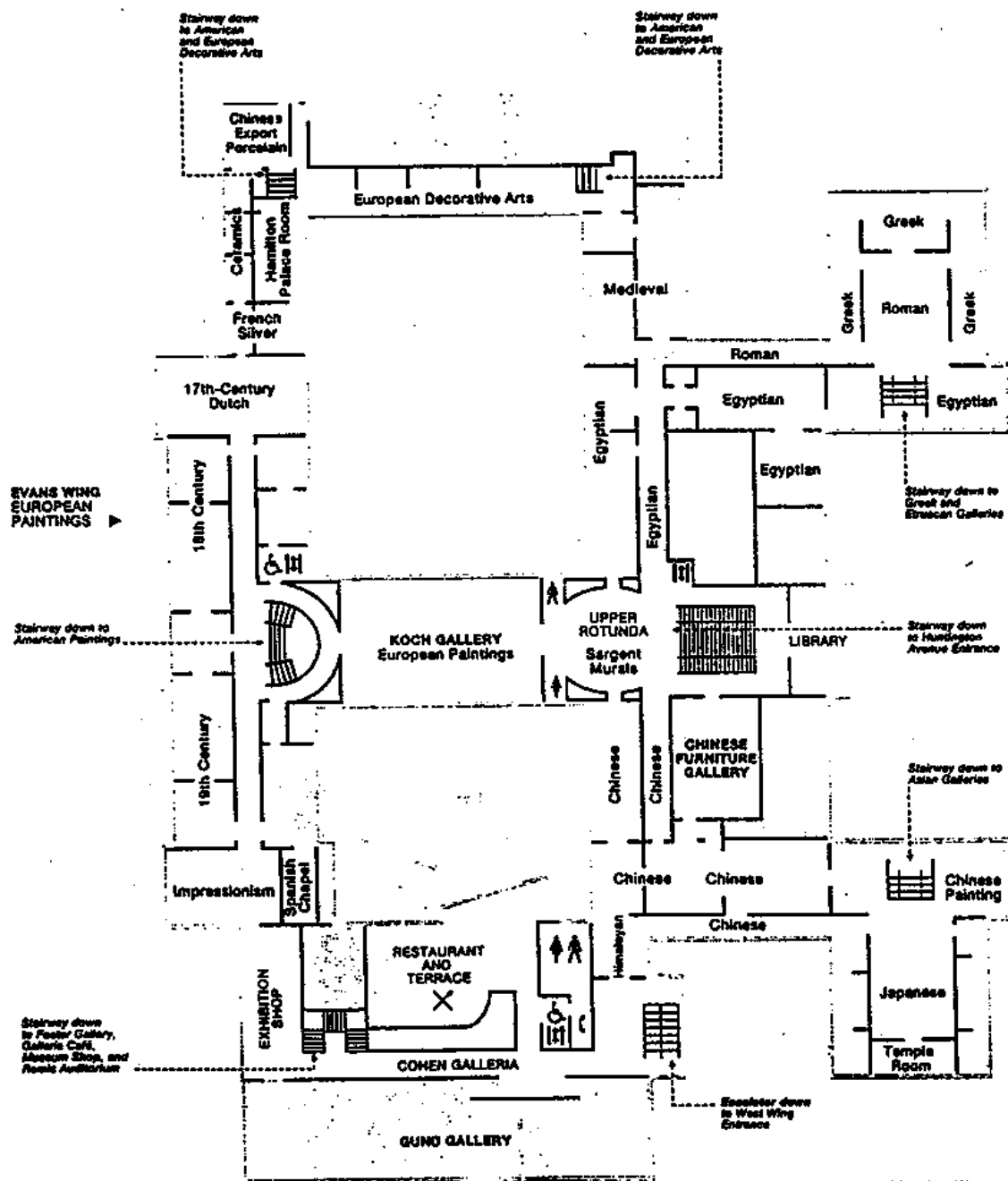
COURT LEVEL

1 FIRST FLOOR and COURT LEVEL



The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Floor Plan

2 SECOND FLOOR



The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
Floor Plan

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